

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of estimating cost of paintless dent repair of automobile body damage susceptible of the same comprising: (a) gathering information about body damage susceptible of P.D.R. of an automobile; (b) processing the information according to a pre-existing estimation program; (c) generating an estimate of repair costs based on the information.
2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the processing includes use of stored digital data.
3. The method of claim 1 further comprising sending the information via a global computer network to a server.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of information gathering comprises confirming the damage is susceptible of P.D.R.
5. The method of claim 4 wherein the damage is one or more dents.
6. The method of claim 4 wherein the step of information gathering further comprises characterizing the dent or dents over a range of sizes of damage susceptible of P.D.R..
7. The method of claim 5 further comprising identifying a cluster of dents and characterizing the cluster.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein the characterizing of the cluster comprises confirming the cluster is contained within a predetermined area and counting the number of dents in that predetermined area.

9. The method of claim 7 further comprising using the range of dent sizes and cluster information to estimate total cost of repair for the vehicle.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of gathering information includes manual counting damage susceptible of P.D.R. repair and using that information to generate a repair estimation.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein the damage is one or more dents.

12. The method of claim 1 further comprising requesting a web page hosted by a web server, the web server including a data input template.

13. The method of claim 12 further comprising communicating the damage information by completing the data input template.

14. An apparatus for estimating cost of paintless dent repair of automobile body damage susceptible of the same comprising: (a) a device to record information about body damage susceptible of P.D.R. of an automobile based on a characterization of the damage; (b) a computer having a data

input adapted to digitally store said information about body damage; (c) a computer with an application program adapted to receive and process said data input and generate an estimation report based on said input data.

15. The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said computer comprises a first computer for data input and a second computer with the application program.

16. The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said device to record information is a worksheet including indicia to prompt recordation of certain information.

17. The apparatus of claim 16 wherein said worksheet is a physical worksheet.

18. The apparatus of claim 16 wherein said is an electronic versions displayable on a display of said first computer.

19. The apparatus of claim 16 wherein said worksheet comprises a physical worksheet and an electronic version.

20. The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said characterization of damage relates to one or more dents over a range of sizes of damage susceptible of P.D.R.

21. The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said characterization of damage includes characterizing a cluster of dents, confirming the cluster is contained within a

predetermined area, and counting the number of dents in that predetermined area.

22. The apparatus of claim 21 further comprising using the range of dent sizes and cluster information to estimate total cost of repair for the vehicle.

23. The apparatus of claim 14 wherein gathering information includes manual counting damage susceptible of P.D.R. repair and using that information to generate a repair estimation.

24. The apparatus of claim 14 further comprising data on a storage medium that is readable by the computer and used to create the estimation.

25. The apparatus of claim 14 further comprising a connection to a global computer network.

26. An apparatus for estimating cost of paintless dent repair of automobile body damage susceptible of the same comprising: (a) a hand carryable and manipulatable device having a length, width and thickness; (b) a plurality of openings in the device of varying areas correlated to a range of areas; (c) a first opening of the plurality of openings defining a designated smallest dent size susceptible of P.D.R. and a second opening of the plurality of opening defining a designated largest dent size susceptible of P.D.R.

27. The apparatus of claim 26 wherein said device comprises a sheet of material.

28. The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the material has a degree of flexibility.

29. The apparatus of claim 28 wherein the material is a paper.

30. The apparatus of claim 28 wherein the material is paper laminated with plastic.

31. The apparatus of claim 28 wherein the material is plastic.

32. The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the width, length and thickness of the sheet are similar to letter sized paper.

33. The apparatus of claim 26 further comprising indicia on the device uniquely identifying the plurality of openings.

34. The apparatus of claim 26 wherein the plurality of openings are arranged in order of next closest area to the one preceding.

35. The apparatus of claim 26 wherein the smallest opening is on the order of 1-1/2 inches squared to 2-1/2 inches squared.

36. The apparatus of claim 26 further comprising an opening substantially larger than any of the plurality of openings, correlated to a predetermined area.

37. The apparatus of claim 36 wherein the predetermined area is correlated to measuring a cluster of dents, the number of dents in a cluster of dents within said predetermined area being adapted to be used to predict total number of dents on a part or all of a vehicle.

38. The apparatus of claim 37 wherein the dents are hail damage dents.

39. The apparatus of claim 26 wherein the device is adapted to project one or more of said openings onto a vehicle.

40. The apparatus of claim 39 wherein the device includes a light source which projects through light or shadows images of at least one of said openings onto a vehicle.

41. The apparatus of claim 39 wherein the device comprises a plurality of separate devices, each having one of said openings.

42. The apparatus of claim 26 wherein the device has one or more adjustable sized openings.

43. The apparatus of claim 26 in combination with a worksheet containing indicia related to P.D.R. estimation.

44. The apparatus of claim 43 wherein the worksheet is electronic.

45. A kit for estimating cost of paintless dent repair of automobile body damage susceptible of the same comprising: (a) a hand carryable and manipulatable device having a length, width and thickness, the device having a plurality of openings in the device of varying areas correlated to a range of areas; a first opening of the plurality of openings defining a smallest dent size susceptible of P.D.R. and a second opening of the plurality of opening defining a largest dent size susceptible of P.D.R.; (b) a recording medium having indicia prompting a user to record a set of identifying information about the vehicle and a set of characterizing information about damage to the vehicle.

46. The kit of claim 45 wherein the device and the record sheet are sized generally the size of letter sized paper.

47. The kit of claim 45 wherein the device further comprises an opening larger than the plurality of openings adapted to characterize a cluster of dents in a vehicle.

48. The kit of claim 45 further comprising an instruction sheet.

49. The kit of claim 48 wherein the instruction sheet includes written instructions relating to a plurality of methods of dent estimation.

50. The kit of claim 49 wherein the method of dent estimation utilizes either characterizing information from the plurality of openings and characterizing information from the larger opening or characterizing information from the plurality of openings and an actual count of dents and characterization of size of dents.

51. A subscriber-based system for estimating cost of paintless dent repair of automobile body damage susceptible of the same comprising: (a) a server adapted to host a web site, the web site being password accessible according to a level of authorization, the server being in communication with a database containing information characterizing damage to an automobile; (b) a subscriber computer adapted for connection to the web site via a global computer network; (c) access to information in the database being dependent on a level of authorization given to a subscriber for compensation.